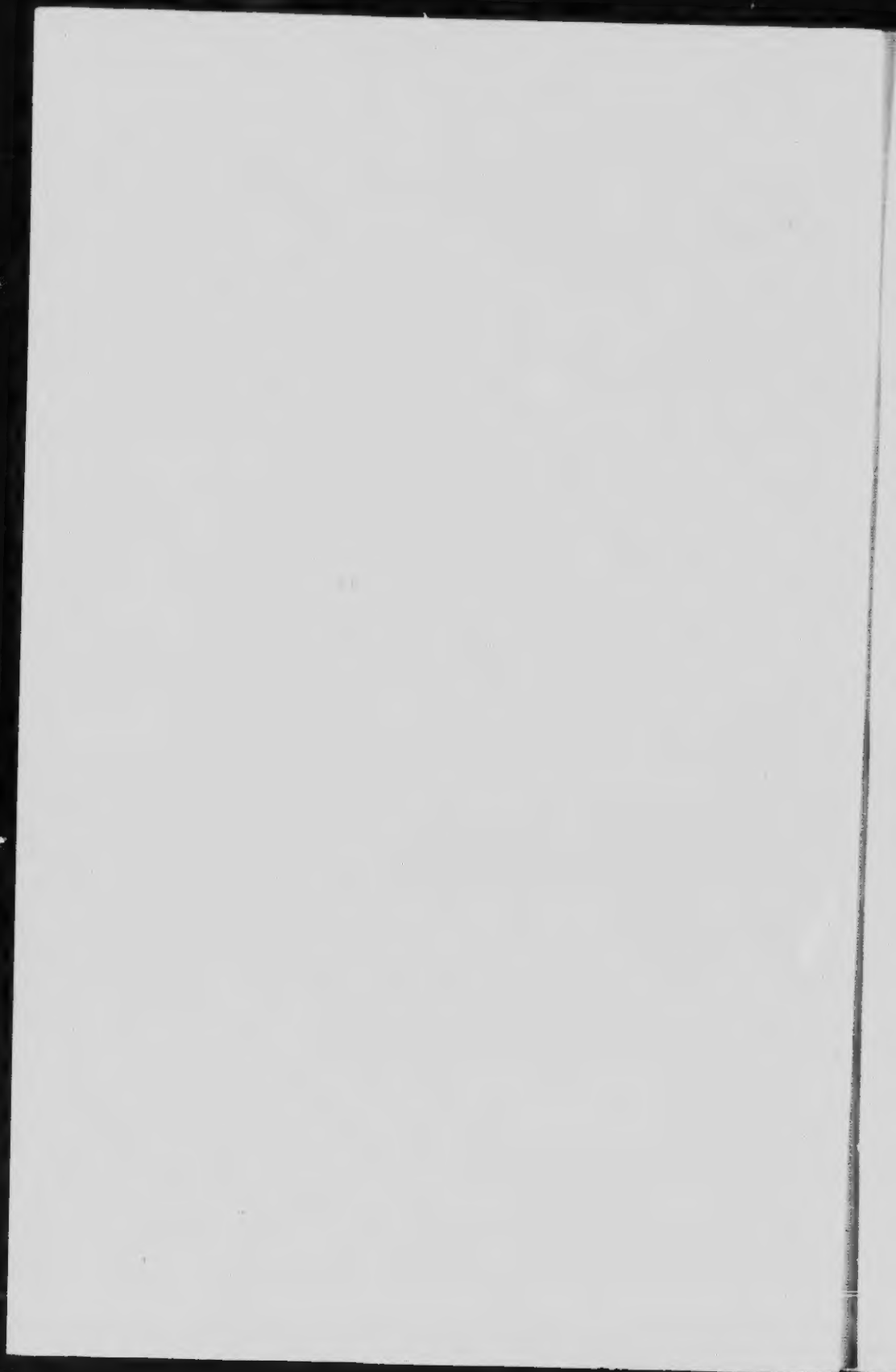


San Logan, Ind. 1850.



Preludes
Sonnets and Other Verses.



PRELUDES

Sonnets and Other Verses

With an Epistle in Criticism and an
Essay entitled "The Rhythmical
Dummy: A Recipe for
Verse-Makers."

BY
JOHN DANIEL LOGAN



TORONTO
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1906

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ΦΙΛΤΑΤΗ ΜΗΤΡΙ
ELIZABETH GORDON LOGAN

Αργύριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐχ ὑπάρχει μοι· ὃ δὲ
ἔχω, τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι—Acts of the Apostles

Πᾶς γὰρ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἔργον ἀγαπᾷ μάλιστα
δ' ἴσως τοῦτο περὶ τοὺς ποιητὰς συμβαίνει.
ὑπεραγαπῶσι γὰρ οὔτοι τὰ οἰκεῖα ποιήματα,
στέργοντες ὥσπερ τέκνα—Aristotle : *Eth. Nic.*

NOTE.

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An Epistle in Criticism.



AN EPISTLE IN CRITICISM,

Chiefly about the true formula of the Keltic genius and the causes of the failure of the Canadian Kelt in poetry.

Addressed to PETER MACLAREN MACDONALD, a veritable poet, in whose verse appears the ancient Gael's imaginative vision of spiritual reality and of enchantment in familiar things.

MY DEAR MACDONALD:

The Sonnets, Lyrics and Essay in this little volume—*Vagabunduli Libellus*—appeared originally in American and Canadian magazines and journals. They are here republished for three reasons. Through an aspect of their content as a text I wish to establish a principle of literary criticism, to define the formula—not Arnoldian—of the Keltic genius, and to answer the question why Keltic Canada has not produced an authentic poet.

My own Verses I have purposely named "PRELUDES"—a term meant to be taken literally. With them now, as in this little volume, neatly packed, boxed,—and out of the way, I have freedom to complete and perfect a larger and more entrancing Song, the theme of which centres about "the Cuchulain cycle of Gaelic sagas." Not in any other literature, Semitic, Grecian, Roman, Teutonic, are there such entralling tales of heroic love and adventure as in these inimitable sagas of the ancient Kelts. There is no other love story as such that approaches in simplicity and dignity, in beauty and pathos, in power and spiritual exaltation the story of the great-souled Naoise and matchless Deirdire, daughter of Colum the Harper,—"the fair-skinned Dearthula," as the chroniclers call her, "whose locks were more

yellow than the western gold of the summer sun" (Dearthula nan cneasa geala bu bhuidhe loinn na oir soir ghrein an t-samhraidh). And not the exploits of Samson. Achilles, Aeneas, Siegfried, are so overwhelmingly magnificent as those of the incomparable Gaelic hero, Cuchulain,—majestic in life and unutterably majestic in death. These are themes worthy of purer gifts and finer craftsmanship than my own. But if in these times of the sway of Might and Vulgarly, not of Love and Art, in every department of life, I accomplish, or inspire another more gifted than myself to accomplish, in verse a tithe of what Edward MacDowell, indubitably the most poetic composer in America, has done in music to reassert and envisage the valid Keltic (or Romantic) spirit, I may pass a belated Kelt, but I shall not pass unworthy and disenfranchised of my spiritual birthright.

As to the poetic quality of the "PRELUDES," I merely note, in passing, all that is necessary or worth while: that competent critics in the United States have complimented the artistry of the Sonnets, in particular their rhythm and vowel music, and kindly have neglected to remark their obvious inelegancies. I myself am fully conscious that they are sometimes reminiscent, or abstract, in imagery, frequently over-aliterative, and sometimes of doubtful purity in terminal music or pedestrian in movement. But for the most part the Sonnets have the gift of rhythm and music, especially those in which, by preference, the structure conforms to a rolling periodicity in the octet, which does not end strictly there, but in the middle of the ninth line, *i.e.*, the first line of the sestet. This, in my view, gives greater massiveness and sweep of rhythmic cadence to the octet than does any other structural device: certainly, as I feel, it satisfies peculiarly that law which Watts-Dunton has termed the "e'-o-and-flow" of the valid sonnet. As to the irregular Lyrics: aside from the quite undeserved compliment that one of them contains a stanza perfect in imagery and music

(p. 57), in my own view they represent at their best nothing more than respectable magazine and newspaper verse. This is as simple, sane, and modest criticism as the poems deserve. Anything else in the way of criticism may be safely left to the members of the meat axe brigade. And so I pass to my essential theme.

Often I have been asked—"How does it happen that you who are a metaphysician and agnostic (!), repeatedly use in your verses the name of God?" Observe the innuendo: metaphysicians have not poetic gifts, or if they have, they have no right to use religious concepts and emotion in their utterances. The personal aspect of the question I dismiss in a few words. I am religious, though not pious; agnostic only in matters that belong to omniscience. And though I profess metaphysics, chiefly through mental indolence, technically named by the guild "love of speculation," I am as naive, ordinary, and human as the little child that weeps heart-broken over its lost toys, or the strong man who stands silent amongst his shattered ideals, or is happy and eloquent in the day of achievement. Therefore I need the spiritual world as much as does anyone else; perhaps more so, because metaphysics breeds moral doubt, often despair. The fact is: we all are metaphysicians when we function on the universe with the faculty of abstract thought; we all are poets when we function on the same world with the heart and imagination; and our vocabulary for the one differs from that for the other precisely as the formula, the sq. on the hypotenuse of a right triangle = the sum of the sqq. on the other two sides, differs from the glorious vision of a summer sunset. If, then, in technical prose writings the metaphysician uses difficult scientific terms to express his *conception* of the universe, is he thus to be debarred from using in verse a familiar, socialized term to express his *sense* of divinity in the inner and outer world?

Cleanthes, a pantheist, in his "Hymn to Zeus" wrote pure poetry; while Lucretius, a materialist, in his "De Rerum Natura," accomplished the loveliest hexameters in Latin literature. Nor may we forget the religious burden of Dante's magnificent stanzas in his "Divine Comedy"; and that great Song of Sorrow wherein Tennyson in our own day commingled entrancingly science and religion, faith and love, terrene death and life everlasting. On the other hand, there stands that assiduous clergyman, Young, who in his "Night Thoughts," despite their religious sublimation, accomplished very doubtful poetry. Imaginative vision of reality and artistic treatment of theme—imagery, form, color, music: these first go to the making of indubitable and enduring verse and poetry.

What, then, in the Teuton or Sassenach is pure metaphysics and remains such, in the Kelt becomes essentially a poetic attitude, his deepest and most apt expression of reality imaginatively apprehended. With the Teuton metaphysics is the negation of poetry. With the Kelt poetic vision is the deepest metaphysical function. To him the universe is, literally, enchanted, haunted—with divinity: ghosts, spiritual presences, are everywhere,—in the hills, the streams, the mists, the clouds, the sunsets, and even in the daisies and the dews. This, then, is the essential formula of the Keltic genius: *A natural and lively sense of divinity in the universe.*

All this is said to raise a question which I shall answer significantly. How does it happen that in the Eastern sea provinces of my native country, almost as lovely in natural magic as the green isle of Eirinn and in the majesty and mystery of earth as ancient Albain in the Gaelic prime,—how does it happen that in this veritable new home of the Kelt Keltism itself has died, and we hear not the voice of an authentic poet in this fair Canadian land? Pray, do not object that Carman, Roberts, and others are authentic poets. They are nothing of the sort. Any man of equal culture and

sensibility, with equal leisure and application, could accomplish as respectable a body of verse. At his best Carman is a poet's poet; Roberts' forte is imaginative prose. The best things in Canadian verse have been done by the French, who have the gift of song as such, or by the Indians, as in the case of Pauline Johnson when she is fundan tally Indian and realizes intimately her racial sense of haunting presences in the natural world. First-rate poetry may come from Canadians, but it will come only through a Keltic Renaissance. In Canada to-day, however, the Kelt, the natural poet, is silent. The causes of this silence are not, as in Ireland, political bondage, or self-shame and ignorance politically induced, but these two: *the disenfranchisement of love, and the decay of natural piety.*

This is not a theory: it is brute fact. I note that in my native land among the Kelts love, even the filial grace of a pure kiss of affection, is tabooed as unmanly; and the exercise of the poetic faculty is equally tabooed as silly. And thus the young Kelt, who by nature is preeminently a lover and a poet, as he is taught by example to feel ashamed to express love and consequently suppresses the faculty until it atrophies or dies, so is he ashamed to express his imaginative vision of reality until the poetic faculty in him also atrophies or dies. But both love and poetry have their seat and inspiration in the deepest function of our nature, the idealizing faculty or imagination. The greatest thing in the world is love, because its ultimate object is the heart of the universe, immortal Love or the Deity. It was the loving faculty, that it might feel at home in the world, first peopled the universe with spiritual presences, with divinity. If we stifle the faculty of love, we kill not only poetry as a mere mundane exercise, but also the very soul of religion. For religion is only a natural lively sense and acknowledgment of divinity in the world; and pure poetry is only the emotional expression in rhythmic form of the reality of the

religious ideal. The poetic faculty reasserts perennially, against all rationalism, doubt, or cavil, the supremacy of spirit everywhere, in the heart of man and in the natural world. Kill the poetic imagination, which is the faculty of love, and we kill immortal Love itself, which is God. Cultivate and sustain that faculty, and we transform a brute world of matter in motion into the fair, green garden of the eternal Spirit.

Through this Epistle, my dear MacDonald, which I have addressed to you, unwittingly on your part, though, in my view, fittingly, because I have perceived in your verse the poetic gift and utterance of the veritable Kelt, I convey this vital message: that the Canadian Kelts possess themselves of their spiritual birthright—pride in the genius and literature of their race and the gifts of love and of natural piety. It may be that thus, sooner or later, in this new home of the Kelt, we shall hear, as our forebears heard in the Gaelic prime, the voice of an authentic poet,—singing the love of great-souled Naoise and matchless Deirdire, and the glorious deeds of that sublimest of heroes, Cuchulain the Unconquerable.

These things I am treating on a larger scale and in a happier way in a monograph to appear under the title, "Edward MacDowell. A Study of Keltism in Modern Music." Meanwhile I venture to believe that my utterance in this Epistle will not be as the voice of one crying alone amongst the silences of waste places.

Ever yours,

J. D. LOGAN.

Parkdale, Toronto.
Hallowe'en, 1906.

Sonnets.



SONNETS.

L'AMERICA ET L'AVENIR.

America is Opportunity.—Emerson.

Love thou the land where yet no beauty dwells!—
The paradisal bowers which thou wouldst find,
The unvex'd sense for which thy soul hath pin'd
Are visions self-begot:—the siren spells
Of thine own heart which, loving calm, compels
Thy thoughts to dreamful days and the quiet mind
Of gods afar from Life's turmoil reclin'd
On beds of amaranths and asphodels
But in that land of Opportunity,
Though mortal toil shall ne'er with rest be crown'd
And sanguine strife shall never cease to be,
There, trampling low Ambition to the ground,
May'st thou through the swirling dust mount round
on round
To star-lit heights,—thy soul serene and free.

SONATA TRAGICA.

(To E. A. MacDowell.)

Dreamer in tones, whose mellifluous music wrought,
As Connla's Harp in Keltic days of yore,
With captive spell, must we hark nevermore
The melody thy wistful spirit caught
From land and sea and sky and every spot
Of Beauty ineluctable, before
The dumb, obscure, appalling Night closed o'er
Thy senses' pearly ports and left thee naught
Save vacant visitings? Ah, Dreamer, though
The gods have veiled thine effluent phantasy,
We are thy homagers, forever thrall
To thy sweet song and music magical
Of winsome Woodland voices, and the low,
Sad, poignant pulsings of the far-off opal Sea!

AS A WOUNDED BIRD—

As a wounded bird whom some fell fowler snares
With morsels all laid warily to lure
His eager feet into a prison dure,
But who, by chance, escaped thence, back fares
In weariness to his dear mate who shares
His secret home amongst the boughs secure
Of some lone tree upon a lonely moor,
And nestling soft twits forth his dolorous cares,—
So I, my soul struck sore by the invidious dart
Of evil hate and counterfeiting tongue,
Turn faint and darkling home to thee, Dear Heart,
Where I, all mute, may hear thy sweetest song
Of love, and feel thy tender kiss impart
The healing balm to wounds of foulest wrong.

RESIGNATION.

I thought to build my world a perfect whole
In happiest semblance of my happiest dreams:
And took no measure of the visionary gleams
Which they who know not doubt, glib-tongued, extol;
Nor prayed to thee that thou, Soul of my soul!
Shouldst blind my sight to that which only seems,
Or mock my foolish heart whene'er it deems
Its wisdom wise and marks no heavenly goal
Of mortal life. But now I lift mine eyes
To thee, O God! whose ways and thoughts transcend
Mine own dim, broken lights. 'Thro' Faith's surmise
I know thy larger love: and I commend
My will to thine own scheme of destinies
And lose my days in thy diviner end.

IN HONOR OF HOMER.

I—TO HOMER: CHIEFEST OF POETS.

Blind bard of Chios, they told me thou wert dead!—
No longer thrall'd thine ancient wondrous tale
Of how the swift Achaian ships set sail
For far-off Troy, by Agamemnon led,
To succor beauteous Helen, thither fled
With sweet-tongued Paris; or how the Northern gale,
Wild-whirled by spiteful god, did not prevail
Against Odysseus, burning to re-wed
His lorn Penelope. But now I know,—
Nor shall dull skeptic steal my joy from me,—
That thou art master of sweet minstrelsy:
Still, as of yore, thine ancient numbers flow,
Soft as the limpid streams that gently go,
Or headlong as the swift and surging sea.

II—TO ACHILLES: GREATEST OF HEROES.

Upon the ensanguined field of Ilios
Achilles, soul of ancient chivalry!
Thou movedst—a god, majestic, swift and free,
And dealing dire destruction for the loss,
By Hector's spear, of thy loved Patroklos,
Thy comrade dear: in vain sent forth by thee
To take thy stead in arms, and ruthlessly
Hurl down Troy's heroes into the horrid jaws
Of gaping Hell. No lust of blood unbent
Thy god-like will; no vulgar sorrow rent
Thy soul. But widowed Love in mortalest pain
For high-souled Patroklos, untimely slain,
Did haste thee to avenge Troy's bloody deeds
When by thy hand the mighty Hector bleeds.

III—TO ODYSSEUS: FONDEST OF LOVERS.

Not thine the spirit, Odysseus, of wild unrest!
Who drank the Cup of Life deep to the lees,—
Now on the plain of Troy, now on the seas
With thine apostate mariners, whose zest
The insidious Lotus dulled, staying their quest
Of Home with opiate dreams of ease.
But thou, impelled by Love's sweet memories,
Mad'st darkling onward to the West
And thy Penelope. O Lover fond!—
Type of the Wise who mark the holy light
From the Soul's throne shine forth undimmed beyond
The senses' wearied wold, and the starless skies,—
I mark thy ways when through the murky night
I toil, lest Love fail of his high emprise.

TO A STUDENT.

Thy meed, lone searcher of the realms of Thought,
Be mine. In yon high chamber where no noise
Of earthly turmoil mounts to mar the joys
Of thine unwearied quest of Riches wrought
From mines of mystery, thou set'st at naught
All greed of gain. But thy pure heart employs
The sacrificial hours—nor ever cloy—
In converse, quiet and long, with minds unbought
By lust of gold or might. Companion, hail!
My soul, well-knit, while run the sacred years,
Supports, as thine, the ways—and knows no fears—
Which lead unto that strange and silent vale
Where only to the pure in heart appears
Far-off, encarnadined, the Holy Grail.

MIDNIGHT IN DAKOTA.

Lo! in that land where myriad star-lit eyes
Look on the graves of those wild Hearts of Fire
Who heard in their strange souls the august choir
Of mountain, stream, and plain and vaulted skies
Tone forth its hymns of pristine harmonies,—
I stood and caught from Nature's mighty lyre
Great chords that melting all my vain desire,
Subdued my meanest fears and made me wise
O'er time and circumstance. And I had stayed
To hark for aye, lest the solemn sanctities
That rose in me and hushed my soul should fade,
As fade the waking dreamer's reveries,
When high above I heard: 'Be not afraid!
'These are thine earnest of holier ecstasies!'

APOSTATE—AND CROWN'D!

I held him my Hero, and battling undismayed
With the awful nether gods of Hell's domain
Who snare the feet of man lest he regain
The sacred seat wherefrom he fell, I laid
Full low foul fiends of Sin; and once, back swayed
By furious onslaught, I quaked and turned, now fain
To mark where he, my Strength, held cheap the strain
And, like true Knight of God, his hope still stayed,
Fought bravely on. Then knew I grief profound,—
And I shall know, while the dissonant years unroll,
The deep, dank darkness of a sunken soul!—
Dear God! where battling on the ignoble ground
Beneath, thy children gain the Unhallowed Goal,
There stood my Hero, apostate, alas!—and crown'd!

AMOR MYSTICUS.

My soul had fainted with keen loss of gain
That I, unlike the untroubled crowd, saw not
My Heart's Desire in flowers of the morning wrought
And garbed in lily-white. For I did fain
(As some strong lover who woos and woos in vain,
But hopes at last to clasp her whom he sought)
Make pilgrimage unto Mine Own, but bought
Defeat and doubt and deepest pang of pain.
Then, as I bowed and hugged my sense of loss,
I heard hard by, as from an Angel Choir,
A voice, full-throated and melodious,
Sing this strange song: 'Cease now thy grief so dire!—
'If thou wouldst still possess thy Heart's Desire,
'Come thou to me, contrite, and bear my Cross!'

EARTH'S TRUE LORDS.

(To a Cumro from a Gael.)

*Llun Gur yw llawn gwir Awen;
Y Byd a lanwodd o' i Ben.*—Twm o'r Nant.

Not they who crown themselves the Kings of Man
By conquest sanguine and the ruthless sov'reignty
Of iron hands that hold the world in fee
To martial Might and Lust: nor they who scan
The books of Science for subtle thoughts to plan
Destructive engines, or possess the key
To Power's sway o'er the Nations' destiny:—
Not Sassenach or Teuton, who know and can,
Are Earth's true Lords. But these shall never fail
Who serve the Arts of Peace and Joy: and men,
As in the Keltic prime, shall still again
Exalt the ancient Cumri and the Gael,—
Lords of the Spirit and the inward Ken
Who wrought for Love and made his name prevail.

TO A LOW COMEDIAN.

Across the garish stage, in painted guise,
I watched thee frolic forth thine antic part,—
As if forgetful save of thy strange art,—
And, serpentining, earn the jaded eyes
Of men thy specious spectacle supplies
With gilded, gay grotesqueries to start
The Hours' leaden feet. But in my heart
I wept: for I had caught with swift surmise
The sad, self-slaying mystery of thy mirth
And riotous revelry. While sons of Earth
(Their high-born hopes laid low) fall faint, or hate
The longing Life that knows no sweet respite,
Thou flauntest thy rollicking in the gruesome face of
Fate
And teachest men blithely to brave the blackest Night.

GUIDE ME AS A STAR!

Lord, guide me as a star immutable
That beacons some lone sailor on his way
O'er seas tempestuous, with kindest ray,
Lest I thine ancient power invincible
Forget, and use no prayer wherewith to quell
My fretful fears, through Faith that thou canst stay
The wild resurgent roll of Life and lay
Its wasting winds to rest. For I would dwell
Secure from hate and strife,—my barque made fast
By yon dim-limned and unensanguined Shore
Laved by thy love; nor hear the hollow roar,
As in a dream, of dreadful tumult past:—
There where no winds and waves beat bleak and froze,
Bring thou my weltering barque—safe Home at last!

TIMOR MUNDI.

My direst dread is not that I shall see
My spirit mocked by the All-disdaining Light
And left, uncrowned, beneath a starless Night,—
That the sacred Thoughts my soul kenned inwardly
Or the sweet new Songs of tremulous melody
Which thrilled my heart, expectant on the height
Of Love, shall speed, like ghosts in speechless flight,
Into the void of Unreality.
Not this my direst dread, but that some day
The World shall woo my will from dissonant strife
With her painted, proud Procuresses to Hell,
Till I shall yield my soul to the temptress' spell
And find alone in her seductive sway
The sweetest witchery of mortal Life.

DEI PHILOSOPHORUM.

I—TO SOCRATES.

Arch-Doubter, mighty master of the minds of men!
None mark'd thy Light when thou 'neath thy disguise
Of Nescience,—subtler than the wisdom of the Wise,—
Sought'st not with aid of creeds, or yet with pen
(Veiling in dun vestments the living Word again)
To trace the sacred Form that underlies
All Good and Beauty, and, as Love in lovers' eyes
Appears, transfigure Truth to the curious ken
In her chaste loveliness. But thou, in mart,
Or busy street, or bibulous banquet hall,
Or some secluded spot, wert wont to meet
The wistful youth, where, gathered about thy feet,
With eager speech alone thou taughtest all
The magic ministry of the Teacher's Art.

II—TO PLATO.

O Master Plato, couldst thou be with us now
Who wait upon thy thoughts and only dream
Of that New City whose celestial scheme
Thine inward vision scanned upon the brow
Of God,—clear patterned there to teach men how
To fashion Earth more fair and to redeem
The World from thrall of things which only seem!—
Then would thy Faithful here no longer bow
Abashed before the scornful crew: but they,
When thy serene spirit before their longing eyes
Shone steadfast as a beacon-star, would rise
With triumph-psalms to greet each high-destined day,
And, in thy light, soon speed the final sway
Of thy pure Word which unaccomplished lies.

III—TO ARISTOTLE.

Long had I searched in deep Philosophy,—
A novice in the quest of Truth. I wrought
In all the lore of the Learned, but found her not.
Then had I given to Ignorance fealty,
When one came near and cried exultingly:
'Wisdom have I from Aristotle brought:
'Seek now and thou shalt find her whom men sought,
'Alone and waiting in gracious majesty.'
O great-souled Stagirite, so god-like o'er all
The realm of Truth thy vision's sweep, thy name
Needs not the glory of frescoed coronal
Or royal monument. As the æons go
Immutable shall stand thine ancient fame,
And the Wise recrown thee Master of those who
Know!

THE SOLITARY.

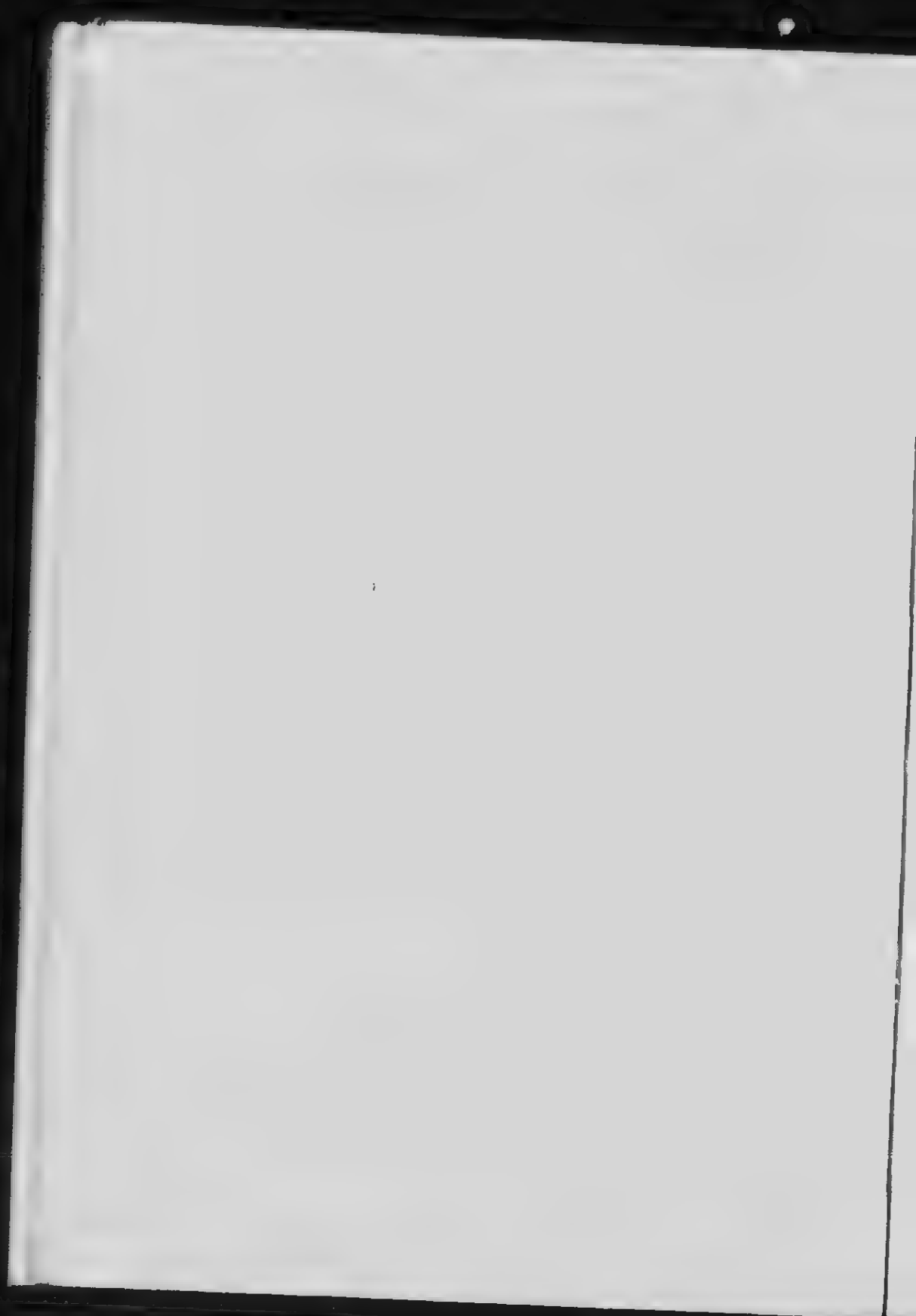
I lie where oft your rare swart tresses lay
And oft your sweet voice called me in the night.
But all the slow blank hours in their flight
Do mock me as I call and vainly pray
That your fond vivid vision long may stay
In my dear dreams and with the dawning light
Bring realer dreams of days 'mongst vales bedight
With flowers of Joy when we the winding way
Of Love trod carelessly. Dear Heart, alas!
The lone, long, lingering trail of Life must I
Forever unaccompanied take and pass
Forever disinherited by Hate?—
O hear me, Heart of mine, O hear my cry:
'Still do I love thee, still do I love—and wait!'

IN MEMORIAM.

(W. M., Sept. 14, 1901.)

Once more the God of Nations, worker of deeds
Dire, dreadful and mysterious, hath said:—
‘Fear not this awful hour! Myself was led
‘By hands that knew no love of noble creeds
‘To the altar of brutal hate. My heart still bleeds
‘For him from whose dark soul all love hath fled
‘And whose scarred feet remorselessly have sped
‘To crimes inexpressible. Know thou my needs
‘Are Faith, sweet Hope and inward Sacrifice.
‘Behold my Servant of heart contrite and true,
‘How on his blameless brow my guerdon lies!
‘See thou and therefrom thine own strength renew:
‘For I, Thy God, bring thus to thy wond’ring eyes
‘The solemn vision of thy duty and thy due.’

Other Verses.



OTHER VERSES.

TO PALLAS : A PRAYER.

Qui bene placarit Pallada, doctus erit.

Stern Goddess, Queen of what is loveliest,
O Pallas Athene, grant now my last request,
And give me riches from thine unfathomed store
Of heavenly wisdom and the sacred lore
Of all the Wise who looked upon thy face,
And, worshipping, received thy most benignant
 grace:—

O Pallas Athene, grant now my last request
And guide my ways to what is loveliest!

EROS ATHANATOS.

I heard the Sea in troubled slumber moan,
As he whom Jove's insatiate vulture tore.
And tremblingly I wot such poignant pang
Presaged the death of man and cosmic doom.
Thereat I cried: 'And must it be that naught
Shall stand when Earth and Moon and Sun and Stars
Forever fall unsphered?' Then did I read
Wherein the Lord of Destinies hath writ
How Love shall ever live nor suffer stanch
Nor shock. Again I harked, and lo! the Sea
Had stayed his sullen, dolorous grief and slept.

AN INCIDENT OF LONE PINE.

Say them words agin, Preacher,
En' say 'em kinder slow:
So's I'll get 'em right an' proper,
Ez I heerd 'em yars ago,
When I wuz jist a codger
En' didn' know
Th' diff'runce 'tween a woman
En' a mother,—
But that wuz long ago!

(What's . . . that? . . . Mister Preacher?
Me goin' fast, y' say?
Aint ready yit fer croakin'?
Naw, y' caint come that play!
A little drop
Of that 'ere licker
Soon'll stop
This damned chokin'.
.
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.
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.
.
.

There . . . that's 'nuff.

Whew! what stuff!

Take that pizen 'way.

Thanks . . . guess I'm now O. K.)

I'm givin' y' it straight, Preacher,

(Naw, 'twon't take me long!)

Y' see, 'twar this way, Preacher,

My Pop wuz allus toutin' 'roun' with pikers,

Playin' hell-west-en'-loose

With this 'ere double-barr'l, repeatin' booze,

Hoopin' 'er up, Preacher, hot en' strong.

Till he wuz no bloody use

Fer stockin'

Er fer grubbin'

En' the whole shebung wuz scootin' to the dooce.

But I wuz jist a codger

En' blinder 'n a bat

Er I'd 'a' know'd my ol' mammy

Couldn't stand it long with that

Ornery, biled galoot f'rever high-falutin'

Boozin', gamin', shootin'

Night 'n' day

In the cussedest sort of way.

En' sure 'nuff it struck her . . Say,
Hear that gum noise?
Er am I a-dreamin'?
Sounded like her voice
Th' day my ol' mammy called me
To her side
Right in this 'ere ol' shanty
Jist afore she died
'Twuz then I heerd them words, Preacher,—
Give us 'em kinder slow
En' fix 'em right en' proper,
So's I'll know
I've got 'em ez my ol' mammy sed 'em
Yars en' yars ago!
(Me? . . Dyin'? . . Mister Preacher,
Me a-feared?
Been 'ere since I wuz jist a codger,—
En' always guv' the squarest deal . . .
Hell! Me feel
A-skeered?
'S gittin' dark, Preacher . . strike a light.
What, only three! . . Well, p'raps yer right.
Might give us 'nuther toothful of that lick
En' then . . . good night.)

So say them words agin, Preacher,
(Ssh!! . . my ol' mammy's callin',
Ez she ust ter do . . .
Ssh!! . . hear her callin'?

.
Guess I'm a-goin' too.)

So say them words . . That's 'em, Preacher . .
While the shaders come a-creepin'
Roun' t'his shanty . . slow en' deep,
En' the pines are whisp'rin' peaceful,—
' *He . . . giveth*
His beloved . . .
sleep!

SAID THE ANGLER TO THE KING—

What though thy head be crowned
And blaring trumpets sound
The people forth thy pageantry to scan?
Thy diadem doth bear
To thee but carking care,—
Nay, be thou the King, but I a fisherman!

I reckon not if thou rule,
So I but have my pool
And wooded stream and lake where troll I can
With baited line that snares
Their sportive mariners,—
Nay, be thou the King, but I a fisherman!

Thou hast thy palace fine,
While lowliest hut is mine,
Rough-hewn, half-open to the sky's wide span:
But there as the days go by,
I lord it leisurely—
Nay, be thou the King, but I a fisherman!

THE MEN BEHIND THE GUNS.

A Simple Song for Decoration Day.

Oh, had I Homer's gift to sing
The Iliad of a later day,
I would not tune my voice for them
Who drank delight from bloodiest fray.

For those who fought for Freedom's cause
And falling died without renown:—
For those I sing a simple song
And weave a plaintive lyric crown.

Not theirs to lead the martial line
Or watch the fearful forces rock:
But theirs to form the weltering ranks,
And meet the battle's sanguine shock.

They fell when young and full of Hope
That Lust and Strife might cease:
They dared to die when Life was sweet,
To bring to earth the fruits of Peace.

No Laureate sings their humble names,
Though angels wept around their grave:
They died, O Lord, to save thy cause,—
Who were the bravest of the brave.

These are thy dead, Almighty God,
Whose strength the hireling poet shuns:
Oh, hallow thou my plaintive lay
For the men who fought behind the guns.

THE SECRET.

From Socrates to Charles Wagner men have vied with one another in solving the problem of how to obtain perennial happiness. Of the solutions some were paradoxical; and some, platitudinous. But it was left to the poet Goethe to reach the acme of philosophical platitude,—to wit:

*'Lerne nur das Glück ergreifen;
Denn das Glück is immer da!'*

Why dost thou, Fool, in endless wand'ring
All thy days employ—
For far-off fields Elysian seeking
For far-off founts of Joy?

Take but Life's happy moments—heeding
Naught else that men hold dear,
Then Happiness, though ever fleeing,
Shall still be ever near!

IF I WERE GOD—

The eternal world contains Gethsemane.— Royce.

'If I were God,' said one whom Nature mocked—
'The World anew would I in love create:
'Benignest aspect sea and sky should wear,
'The bounteous earth the fruits of gladness bear,—
'If I were God!'

'If I were God,' said one whom Hope forsook—
'The World anew would I in love create:
'No more should sons of men tempt high emprise,
'Nor blindly stretch vain hands unto the skies,—
'If I were God!'

'If I were God,' said one whom Trial wracked—
'The World anew would I in love create:
'From human brows should fall no bitter sweat
'Nor hearts heroic taste the Long Regret,—
'If I were God!'

To them the Man of Sorrows: 'Peace, O son!
'Begrime not thus thy speech with earth's foul dust:
'Each day I drink thy Cup of Agony:
'Each night I pray in thy Gethsemane—
'And I, O son, am God!'

DE MORTUIS.

(I)

THE DARK HOUR.

The heavenly Voice that night I did not hear,
When, as I watched, His Messenger drew near,
And spake: 'Who gave, retaketh now His own:

Weep not nor fear!

I turned to clasp again my dearest bliss,
Nor heard Death's speech of Faith,—but now I wis
On Earth alone I touched my loved one's lips
With my last kiss.

(II)

THE NEW DAY.

Within God's holy Eden beheld I there
Blown-roses crushed and lovely lilies rare.
'These roses, Lord, what are they?' I inquired.
'The souls of those,' He answered, 'who aspired
'To heights that Martyrs prize.' 'And these,' I cried,
'These lilies, what are they?' 'Young lives that died
'In innocence,' He said,—'My lilies rare!
'Lo, here thine own beloved's soul blooms fair!

PER AMICA SILENTIA LUNÆ.

A Reverie and a Question.

In the shadowy vale of By-gone Days
I wander to-night alone,
With the dear, brave Hearts of the Long Ago,
Who have passed to the great Unknown.

I see each face, I hear each voice,
I clasp each gladsome hand,
And I own the grace of the dear, brave Hearts,
Who now wait in the Silent Land.

They save my days when at last I faint—
The dear, brave Hearts of Old:
They bring sweet calm in the storm and stress,
As the wearying years unfold.

They rest from toil, and are at peace,—
As I wander with them alone—
Ah, God! shall my fitful life have its end,
When I pass to the great Unknown?

RENOUNCEMENT.

I built mine altar on thine Heart:
Each morn I burned Love's incense there:
And thou the hallowed sacrifice
 Blest with thy dear commemorative eyes.

Now thou art gone into the Night,
And Sorrow sits alone with me:
Her dumb cold lips she will not ope
 To call thee from the sepulchre of Hope.

The darkened house within is still:
And though I wistful vigil keep,
The winds without cry mournfully
 That thou, alas! wilt not return to me.

.

Ah, though the days that are to come
Bring not thy lost form back to me,—
Yet will I for Love's sake arise
 Each morn and on thine Image sacrifice!

WHERE GREEN GRAVES LIE.

Dear Beauteous Death, jewel of the Just.—Vaughan.

—τοὺς δ' ἤδη κατέχεν φυσίζοος αἶα
ἐν Λακεδαιμόνι αἶθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ
—*Iliad*, III. 243.

Nothing so marks the brutalization of our age as its sentiment towards the grave and burial. Death is regarded as an inevitable happening; and after "the last sad rites," which have often the vulgarity of a social function or the coarseness of a low Irish wake, the Dead are hurried away to be imprisoned in a repulsive vault or in a modern cemetery, hardly distinguishable from a public park. There is no longer the slow, mute procession to some sequestered spot of Nature's handiwork, where the Dead are laid down tenderly, to rest forever "in Earth's soft arms reposing." It is in this gracious mood that Henry Vaughan thinks of the spiritual significance of "Dear Beauteous Death, jewel of the Just," and Homer of the *φυσίζοος αἶα* as our last resting-place, wherein we sleep as tired children in the soft, warm arms of a mother.

When I go home again—

And be it soon or late—

I shall not bide

By glade or moor or glen,

By field or fen,

Where now the lone bird calls

At eventide

Unto his mate:—

'I weep,

I wait;'

Or by the sounding shore,
Or yet by towering hill,
Beneath the moon:
Whose organ voices o'er
The burdened soul resound
In solemn tune:—
*'Be strong,
Be still.'*

But there where green graves lie,
And all Life's panoply
Turns fast to dust,
Oft shall I stay
To mark the way
Of mortal man and wonder why
The increasing years increasing travail bring:
And trust
To hear above the invocal clay
Some voice vouchsafe reply:—
*'Though Death seem King of kings
And layeth low both great and small,
Fear not his coming, O weary heart,
Fear not at all,
Nor weep!'*

*Still giveth He his own beloved sleep
 Who willeth all things best:
 Abide His times, O weary heart,
 And in the sweet asylum of the tomb
 Thou too shalt soon
 Find rest.'*

So shall I duly tread,
 Beyond unwonted ways of men,
 In the dear sequestered Garden of the Dead,—
 When I go home again.

MEZZOTINTS OF LOVE.

*These many years since we begun to be
 What have the gods done with us? What with me?*
 —Swinburne.

(I.)

FRUITION.

I waited, wistful, through the envious years
 Till all thy Spiritual Springs were rife:
 I sought thee Sweet! at their fountain-rise,—
 I drank of Love, and Love was Life.

(II.)

PREMONITION.

When I behold Love's Image, Sweet!
Deep mirrored in the lake
Of thy dark liquid eyes,
I linger, longing, o'er the brink, Sweet!
To mark Love's mysteries take
My soul with soft surprise.

*O Sweet! to-day thou art all my own;
No dank winds blast
Love's outward cast:—
O Sweet! to-day thou art all my own.*

Yet while I linger thus, Sweet!
O'er Love's dear dwelling-place,
My joy is strangely bound
By dread of darkened days, Sweet!
When I shall seek Love's face,
And Love no more be found.

*Then to-day, Sweet! be thou all my own:
Ere dank winds blast
Love's outward cast:—
Then to-day, Sweet! be thou all my own.*

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(III.)

IDLE TEARS.

Shadow now, dear Heart, in the little room,
Shadow now, dear Heart, and the Autumn's cool,
While the days grow short, and no roses bloom!

*Ah, the days that were, the dear dead days,
Now past, nor ever again to be!
Though I seek them with tears through the in-
creasing years,
They shall never come back to me.*

Snow now, dear Heart, on the window panes,
Snow now, dear Heart, and the cold winds blow,
While the days grow dark, and Winter gains.

*Ah, the days that were, the dear dead days,
Now past, nor ever again to be!
Though I seek them with tears through the in-
creasing years,
They shall never come back to me.*

Rain now, dear Heart, falling warm and fast,
Rain now, dear Heart, and the breath of life,
While April days herald Spring at last!

*Ah, the days that were, the dear dead days,
Now past, nor ever again to be!
Though I seek them with tears through the in-
creasing years,
They shall never come back to me.*

High sun again, dear Heart, high sun,
And the songs, dear Heart, of the gladdening birds,
For the days grow long, and May is done!

*Ah, the days that were, the dear dead days,
Now past, nor ever again to be!
Though I seek them with tears through the in-
creasing years,
They shall never come back to me.*

Shadow again, dear Heart, and pain to-day,
Sweet pain for me in the lonely room,
With June now here,—but you away!

*Ah, the days that were, the days of June,
Now past, nor ever again to be!
I would bless their return with tears that burn,
Could they ever come back to me.*

The Rhythmic Dummy.

THE RHYTHMICAL DUMMY: A RECIPE FOR VERSE-MAKERS.

Mr. George Ade, librettist of musical comedies, has humorously described the method that obtains between the composer and the librettist in the making of the verse of a comic opera. His own composer, he says, often found it impossible to adjust the words and rhythms of the verse to the score. The composer overcame the difficulty in an original way. He would send the librettist, as Mr. Ade calls it, a "dummy" of the lilt or rhythm needed in the verse to aid the composer in his scoring. The dummy, he adds, would run like this:

"The dumble-doo and the dilly doss,
The umpty umpty oo;
While the livelong hours of the do-dad day
Did tra-tra la la la-loo."

What, of course, was meant by Mr. Ade to be taken as an absurd fiction, contains, none the less, two significant truths. One of these is well known; the other is not recognized at all: and with the second I am here concerned. When the composer attempted to aid the librettist with a rhythmical dummy, he said implicitly that the strictly musical element in verse is not a certain quality in the tones of the syllables or of the

rimes, but primarily rhythm. Just as much, too, he said that an efficient means to the actual process of poetical composition is not imagination and knowledge, but a rhythm actually singing itself persistently in the mind.

Poets and teachers of the history and appreciation of literature are often asked by those who have talent for verse-making to recommend some book that will instruct them in the art of poetical composition. Invariably the same answer is given: 'Consult Lanier's "Science of English Verse," Gummere's "Handbook of Poetics," Corson's "Primer of English Verse," Hood's "Practical Guide to English Versification," etc.,' as if technical description of the forms and laws of poetry or verse were a recipe for composing it. Knowledge of these things may secure correctness of form; but it will not give the breath and life of poetry. It were better to recommend these verse-makers—who, as the talented, are poets made, not born—the method of the rhythmical dummy. If it be objected that this will reduce the art of poetry to mechanics, two replies are open to us. The dummy itself is a mechanical form. It had, however, a mental counterpart in an inward rhythm: and this inward rhythm is at the moment of composition actually pulsing through the mind; or if not, can be caught up again by way of the mechanical dummy. In any case the matter is settled by the fact that the rhythmical dummy was thus used by the most tuneful poet and the most lyrical composer

of the English people,—by Robert Burns, and Sir Arthur Sullivan.

In his "Literary History of America," Mr. Barrett Wendell describes Burns as the 'greatest poet of the English people.' Mr. Wendell does not wait to explain why he accounts Burns the greatest poet—Shakespeare and Milton, we presume, always aside—of the British people. Agreeing, however, with Mr. Wendell as to the fact, there are two reasons why Burns may be thus honored, of which only one is pertinent to this essay. Burns marks a return to Nature for the subject and inspiration of poetry. The elemental passions and the commonest face of nature are treated by him with feeling that can be described only as human; and the treatment itself is winsomely expressed in simple and natural verse-forms. Ignoring Burns' historical position, many, no doubt, would hold that these things could be said as justly of Cowper and Wordsworth. Still, given as Cowper and Wordsworth were to reflection, Burns, it must be said, not only writes with absolute spontaneity, natural abandon, and sincerity, but also, literally, sings forth the purest poetry. He does not sing so sweetly as Chaucer, or so daintily as the cavalier poets and Herrick, or so compellingly as Browning, who lilt us into a lust of love and of life. None the less Burns' 'songs' are the songs which the English-speaking peoples sing in their humanest moments, and sing perennially.

This happens not so much because Burns' songs

express joy in the elemental passions, but rather because they are supremely 'tuneful.' They enter the heart readily and spring naturally and inevitably to the tongue for utterance in music, just as the present-day popular airs and melodies instantly catch the ear and are whistled in the streets. The tunefulness of Burns' songs, which is their perennial charm, was secured for them by their having been made in a homely way to music (*i. e.*, rhythm) itself.

We have authority to show that in his own way Burns employed as the chief aid to poetical composition the rhythmical dummy. His biographer, Blackie, asserts that when the mood for poetical composition came upon the poet he would quietly leave his fireside, and lying down upon the sward, would 'croon' over an 'air,' which was for Burns the source both of the poetic idea and of its form.* When his mind had thus become thoroughly burdened with a theme and its form, the poet, still crooning an air, would re-enter the house, and taking up ink and paper would write his verses to the living melody as it sang itself out in his heart and imagination. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that, as his biographer states, Burns' ear was not sensitive to melodic intervals: his crooning was not singing as such. So that, it appears, his inspiration was nothing more than the bare sense of a rhythmical lilt. But once under its influence, thought,

* See also Carlyle, *ESSAY ON BURNS*, for practically the same story.

vocables and rimes readily followed to the making of the world's most enduring songs.

If Burns' poems were composed to the crooning of a bare rhythm, Sir Arthur Sullivan's songs and the lyrical passages of his operas were composed in the most pedestrian way to a rhythmical dummy. He himself has told us that the success of his compositions, as he thought, was due to his method of first seeking out a bare rhythm. When he had hit upon the rhythm which satisfied him, he next committed it to paper in the most mechanical (non-melodic) form. Having thus secured a rhythm, the composer set about the task of scoring the melody and harmony as they were created under the inspiration of the rhythm pulsing in his heart.* Now, the popularity of Sullivan's songs and his operas is due to their supreme tunefulness. And this quality, as in the case of Burns' poems, had for its cause the more or less mechanical fixing of a lilt or rhythmic scheme as a basis of actual composition.

We may, then, fairly say that Burns and Sullivan in their own way employed the method of the rhythmical dummy in composing. If one could collect in a vol-

* "The first thing I have to decide upon is the rhythm, and I decide on that before I come to the question of melody. The notes must come afterwards. . . . The melody may always come before metre with other composers, but it is not so with me. If I feel that I cannot get the accents right in any other way, I mark out the metre in dots and dashes, and not till I have quite settled on the rhythm do I proceed to actual notation."—*Strand Magazine*, Vol. xiv, p. 653 ff.

ume—as Mr. Bainton has done for prose-writers in his “Art of Authorship”—statements from poets themselves as to their actual method of composing, one could offer, I believe, empirical proof that the employing of a rhythmical dummy is pretty universally practised. At any rate we suspect—to take a notable instance—that the singular popularity of Kipling’s “Departmental Ditties” and “Barrack-room Ballads” is due to their lilt, and that this lilt has the same origin as the tunefulness of Burns’ lyrics, or of Sullivan’s operas. The subtle ‘music’ of the poetry of Tennyson or Swinburne is one thing, and has an highly artificial origin. The tunefulness of Burns’ lyrics, or the lilt of Kipling’s ditties and ballads, is another thing, and has a natural rhythmical basis. If the employing of the rhythmical dummy be characterized as mechanical or artificial, it is just to reply that the music of Tennyson’s poetry is much more ‘made’ than the lilt of Kipling’s verse, or the genuine tunefulness of Burns’ lyrics.

If a recipe for verse-making were really available, it could only be that of the rhythmical dummy. While indeed knowledge of the laws and forms of poetry is immensely worth while to the poet,—the poet in this case who is somewhat made, not born,—composing to the burden of a rhythm is the best means of securing, not, perhaps, beauty of idea, or nicety of poetic form, but fundamental music and the breath and life of poetry.

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